lakh MTs of sugar is lying in the various godowns of Karnataka, worth about Rs. 1174.00 crores as on 31.10.2001.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) In order to reduce sugar stocks, the Government is, *inter-alia*, encouraging the export of sugar. The following measures have been taken in this regard:—

(i) Levy exemption has been given on the quantity of sugar exported.

(ii) The quantity of sugar exported is treated as advance free sale release and is adjusted after a period of 12 months from the date of release. Government has recently on 13.11.2001 increased the defernment of adjustment to 18 months.

(iii) Duty Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) @ 5% value of F.O.B. price of sugar has been allowed.

(iv) Quantitative ceiling on export of sugar has been removed.

(v) Requirement of Registration-cum-Allocation Certificate from the Agricultural & Processed Food Export Development Authority(APEDA) has been dispensed with effect from 1.4.2001.

(vi) State Governments of the major sugar producing States have been requested to give remission in purchase tax on sugarcane on the quantity of sugar exported.

The sugar factories have been provided temporary relief by way of permitting them to sell equivalent quantity of unlifted levy sugar stocks as free sale sugar in the open market. During the sugar season 2000-2001, out of 1,62631 MTs. of unlifted levy sugar stocks so far permitted to be sold as free sale sugar, the share of sugar factories in Karnataka works out to 48,803. 6 MTs.

Advance releases of free sale sugar have been made, subject to adjustment and 5% levy obligations, to needy sugar mills to enable them the clear cane price dues of the farmers and to reduce their stocks.

Increase in prices of onion and potato

499. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA:
SARDAR GURCHARAN SINGH TOHRA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) Whether there has been a sudden spurt in the prices of onion and potato in the country, recently;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to contain the increase in their prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) and (b) The retail prices of onion and potato indicated an increase during October and November, 2001 due to delay in the harvesting of kharif onion and lean supply season for potato. The Kharif crop of onion was affected in some parts of the country due to untimely and delayed rainfall. The kharif crops of potato and onion are now expected to arrive in the market from the last week of November. The retail prices of onion and potato at four metropolitan cities were as follows:

(Rs. per Kg.)

Item Centre	August 1, 2001	September 3, 2001	October 1, 2001	November 1, 2001	November 19, 2001
ONION					
Delhi	11.00	10.00	10.00	12.00	12.00
Mumbai	6.50	6.50	8.00	9.00	9.00
Kolkata	10.00	10.00	12.00	10.00	10.00
Chennai	5.00	6.00	9.00	10.00	10.00
POTATO					
Delhi	11.00	8.00	10.00	12.00	12.00
Mumbai	9.50	9.50	9.50	9.50	9.50
Kolkata	6.00	6.50	8.00	8.00	8.00
Chennai	8.00	5.00	9.00	9.00	9.00

(c) The Government has maintained a close watch on the availability and prices of onion. Exports of onion continue to be under quantitative restrictions and export releases were made after assessing the availability and prices. Export was also suspended for one month in August, 2001. All the State / UT Governments were requested to monitor the prices and initiate measures to control the prices.